

Bristol Parks Forum Terms of Reference

1. Introduction:

The primary aims of the Bristol Parks Forum are:

- ❑ **To campaign to protect and enhance all public green space in the City of Bristol**
- ❑ **To influence decision making, including resources allocation, on a local and national level, affecting parks and green spaces in the city.**
- ❑ **To act as a key consultation body on parks and green spaces in the city.**
- ❑ **To offer an opportunity to share ideas and experience.**

2. Membership and Representation:

- 2.1 **Members:** Membership of the Forum will be for resident lead Park Groups or other groups with an interest in protecting/improving parks or green spaces (including natural spaces and outdoor playgrounds).
- 2.2 **Groups:** A 'group' in this context would not need a constitution or any other formal organisation, only to be able to show it is committed to being open to all and able to sign a membership form that states this.
- 2.3 **Access:** Groups will need to demonstrate that they advertise their meetings locally (e.g. posters in park, corner shop, websites, social media) beyond the existing membership.
- 2.4 **Representatives:** Groups will nominate representatives of the group to attend the Forum meetings (attendance may have to be restricted to 2 members per group depending on venue size)
- 2.5 **Becoming a member:** The Forum will welcome new members who meet the terms 2.1 to 2.3 above. They will cease to be members if they no longer meet these terms.
- 2.6 **Voting:** Each group will carry a single vote. In the eventuality of the Forum needing to vote, one of the representatives will vote on behalf of the group.

- 2.7 **City wide organisations:** City wide organisations (such as the Civic Society, Wildlife Trust and VOSCUR) which also meet the other criteria 2.1 to 2.3 above, can be members with one vote per organisation.

3. Leadership:

- 3.1 **Chair:** The Forum will elect a Chair by vote at each Annual Meeting. The Chair will act as the first point of contact between the Forum and the Parks Service, individually represent the Forum membership in a formal capacity when appropriate, and ensure the Forum meets the other terms set out in this terms of reference (in particular, relating to equal opportunities and accessibility).
- 3.2 **Vice Chair:** The Forum will elect a Vice Chair who will act in the absence of the Chair.
- 3.3 **Committee:** Committee Members will be elected at the Annual Meetings. The Committee can also appoint Committee Members between meetings. The committee should represent groups from as wide a range of types of park (eg formal, informal, estates, nature reserves etc) and as many different areas of the City as possible. Where areas or types of park are underrepresented the committee will encourage new members to join.
- 3.4 **Eligibility:** Chair and Vice Chair should be representatives of member groups (as defined in 2.1 and 2.9). At no time will both the Chair and Vice Chair positions be held by members from the same group. Individuals with relevant experience or knowledge (whether or not they are representatives of park groups) may be invited to join the committee.
- 3.5 **Committee Roles:** The Chair, in consultation with committee members, will appoint committee members to any specific roles considered necessary. Roles will include (but are not limited to):
Secretary with overall responsibility for keeping a list of member groups, communicating with members and organising meetings with the support of Bristol Parks.
Treasurer with responsibility for operating any bank accounts and keeping accounts.
The roles of Secretary and Treasurer cannot be held by the same committee member and the Chair and Vice Chair cannot be appointed to these roles. The appointments for each year will be reported to members at the first full meeting after the AGM.
- 3.6 **Bank Accounts:** The Parks Forum will operate bank account(s) in the name of 'Bristol Parks Forum' as deemed necessary by Treasurer. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will be authorised signatories for bank accounts. All bank accounts will require two

signatures on all cheques and/or authorisation by two signatories for any electronic withdrawals.

- 3.7 **Representing the Forum:** The Chair (or other committee member as agreed by the committee) may respond on behalf of the Forum on any issue where the Forum is consulted or asked for its views, or where a public statement is appropriate. Before responding they will consult with other Committee Members and consider views previously expressed by the Forum.

4. Organisation and style:

- 4.1 **Frequency:** The Forum will aim to meet four times per year, including an Annual Meeting in each calendar year. Additional meetings, perhaps covering a specialist subject, can be added to the programme as necessary.
- 4.2 **Style of meetings:** The Forum agendas as a general rule will include 'Open Access' and 'Learning' items.
- 4.3 **Access agenda:** This item will allow time for groups to bring to the Forum each time, a particular issue which they would like to see tackled which is outside the agreed forward agenda/programme.
- 4.4 **Learning agenda:** This item will cover a particular theme where members have agreed they would like to know more. It will most likely be delivered by a council officer and/or guest speaker.
- 4.5 **Notice:** Forum members will be made well aware of the forward meeting agendas and what to expect, to enable them to attend those that are of particular interest.
- 4.6 **Website/Email Updates:** Between meetings the Committee will keep members up to date via the Parks Forum website and email updates. Forum members are also encouraged to give their views on current issues to the Committee between meetings, so that the Chair can take these views into account when responding to enquiries or issuing statements.
- 4.7 **Working Groups:** The main Forum meeting or the committee can opt to set up Working Groups - which will not have any decision making status but will report back to the main group - comprising (say) 3 or 4 members to look at a particular subject in more detail or to discuss issues with other bodies such as the Parks Service.
- 4.8 **Equal Opportunities:** The Forum is committed to being accessible and inclusive and to ensuring that its meetings are run in an inclusive, friendly and accessible way.

4.9 **Evaluation and review:** The Forum will undertake regular review and evaluation of the way that it operates. This will include an annual review in line with the annual cycle of meetings, possibly undertaken by an independent body outside the membership and the city council.

4.10 **Promotion:** There is a need to publicise the Forum, so that anyone interested in joining would have the option to do so.

5. Forum Agenda:

5.1 **Agenda setting:** The agenda for each meeting shall be agreed by members of the committee and be distributed at least one week before the meeting. Suggestions for future agenda items will be invited at Forum meetings, via the website and by email. The agreed objectives of the Forum will be used to help prioritise items for inclusion.

6. Not Used

7. Status

7.1 **Consultation:** The Forum is formally recognised by the City Council as a key consultation body for the Parks Service. It expects to be consulted on all major changes and developments in the division.

7.2 **Responding to consultations:** The Forum might not wish to respond to issues presented to members by the Parks Service or other council services; but the importance of offering the Forum the option whether to respond needs to be recognised.

Amended and agreed by Parks Forum workshop

19th March 2003

Southville Centre.

and at the Parks Forum Meetings on

11th October 2008, 13th October 2012, 11th October 2014, 14th Oct 2017